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# Chief of Naval Operations Shares His Vision for High Velocity Learning

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## Chief of Naval Operations Shares His Vision for High Velocity Learning

By *Kenneth A. Stewart* - [July-September 2016](#)

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John M. Richardson visited the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) to help celebrate the achievements of the university's 2016 Spring Quarter graduates, but while at the university, he took a moment to discuss one of the key lines of effort in his Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority ... high-velocity learning.

The term high-velocity learning was penned by Steven J. Spear in his book, "The Velocity Edge," which explores methods for building a system of "dynamic discovery," attacking and solving problems when they occur, converting weaknesses into strengths, sharing information and developing leaders invested in their subordinates' successes.

"If we achieved the vision of high-velocity learning, we would see across the Navy, a keen desire to improve each and everything that we do," said Richardson.

Richardson has reached out to NPS to help him realize his vision. In doing so, he is relying upon the expertise shared by the dynamic faculty that NPS works to cultivate.

"We have true scientists here ... The influence of the Naval Postgraduate School is going to be felt as we harness the deep expertise of the faculty here and inject that into our students who then go off and start to lead around our Navy.

"In learning institutions, particularly one as spectacular as the Naval Postgraduate School, they use the engine of high-velocity learning, which is very similar to the scientific method," continued Richardson. "You take that and you export it, not just as a scientific problem, but by [applying it to practical] problems."

Richardson stressed that his vision of a Navy that embraces high-velocity learning can only be achieved if it is able to break free from the confines of academia, and be put to use throughout the fleet.

"It is very important that this not be confined just to schools. It has to happen out in the fleet. We are working very closely with not just the Naval Postgraduate School, but all of the Navy's schools, so that they can find a way to teach the principles of high-velocity learning. Our leaders can go out there and become teachers. We teach the teachers here, and that starts and spreads across the fleet," said Richardson.

High-velocity learning also works from the bottom up, the CNO says. It recognizes the need to take advantage of the various talents and perspectives provided by the newest members of an organization.

"There is a tremendous amount of energy out there in the fleet, particularly among our young Sailors, who just see things that could be better. They see how we could be doing our business smarter and we want to tap into that," explained Richardson.

According to Richardson, the success of high-velocity learning is also tied directly to creating a culture that is characterized by positive attitudes and the desire to constantly seek self-improvement.

"You start to get into this cycle where ... we're better today than we were yesterday [and you ask], how can we do it even better tomorrow, not only in our schools, but in every work center across the



Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John M. Richardson meets with NPS Associate Professor Ray Buettner at the Advanced Robotic Systems Engineering Laboratory (ARSENL), June 16. Richardson toured the campus and met with NPS faculty, staff and students during a visit to campus for the university's Spring Quarter Graduation ceremony. Photo courtesy of NPS.



Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John M. Richardson is briefed by NPS Professor Claudia Luhrs at NPS' Center for Materials Research, June 16. Richardson toured the campus and met with NPS faculty, staff and students during a visit to campus for the university's Spring Quarter Graduation ceremony. Photo courtesy of NPS.

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Navy? It's important to achieve that attitude," said Richardson.

Fresh from shaking the hands of the 343 members of NPS' latest graduating class, Richardson had ample opportunity to speak to a wide swathe of the Navy's best and brightest — students that will return to the very fleet he leads. He was quick to mention the confidence that he has in them, and their ability to contribute to his vision.

"I have tried to impart on the students and faculty two things, one, that the Naval Postgraduate School here in Monterey is a real treasure for the Navy and the entire nation. I want to bring home very clearly that the postgraduate school is a bright star in the constellation of [Naval educational institutions] and that this is a strategic place.

"I also want to be sure that [NPS students] understand that, by virtue of their time here ... they will cross all services throughout the Department of Defense. They will work across agencies and with international students, and those relationships cross cultural divides," said Richardson. "These are going to be strategic relationships. As they go off into their new jobs around the globe, I want them to keep in touch and to understand that we are really counting on them to make a strategic difference out there," said Richardson.

*Reprinted from Naval Postgraduate School.*

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